



# THE GOOD STEWARD

St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish Stewardship Council Newsletter

*Celebrating the Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure*

VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1 • WINTER 2009

## LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Parishioners of St. Jane de Chantal,

As we bring the annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week to a close, this edition of *The Good Steward* highlights St. Jane de Chantal School. I am sure you will enjoy reading about the latest in classroom technology — Smart Boards! Through the leadership of Betsy Hamilton, our principal, and our School Board, chaired by Patti Bubar, our school continues to excel in every area. We are also blessed with a very dedicated Home and School Association, guided by Sandra Johnson, which supports our school with much time, talent and treasure. The other article tells the story of our School Endowment Fund which assists in keeping tuition affordable.

I want to express my gratitude to those of you who pledged to the 2008 Archbishop's Appeal. We exceeded our goal thanks to your efforts. The 2009 Appeal is underway. It is co-chaired by Leo Dimond and Tim Kraus. The weekends of February 7, 14 & 21 were dedicated to this important effort that provides so many of the ministries in our Archdiocese. Please respond as generously as you can.

Speaking of support, I must ask you to remember your weekly Offertory commitment to the parish. For the first six months of this fiscal year, the Offertory collection is \$24,376 under budget. That is a serious matter, since the Offertory must fund all our normal parish programs. Please be sure to use your weekly envelopes or Faith Direct. If the budget deficit continues, we may have to face a cutback in staff and/or programs. Our dedicated staff, as well as the members of the Finance Council, are working very hard to control or reduce expenses, but the parish must count on the sacrificial offerings of each of you. Even an extra dollar a week will help!

I close by assuring you of my prayers and I ask you to pray for one another.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Donald Essex, Pastor 



## SCHOOL'S NEW HIGH-TECH TOOL RESHAPES LEARNING

It's mid-morning in Ms. Emily Durkin's eighth-grade science class, and the students filing in to take their seats are still in transition from their previous class. There's a low hum of chatter as chairs scrape across the floor and backpacks are opened. But the conversation stops abruptly as the teacher calls the class to attention and a familiar logo flashes on a large white screen at the front of the classroom: "Jeopardy" time.

A grid appears identical to the one used by the popular TV game show, with the numbers representing points instead of dollar amounts. Up come the categories: "Abiotic Factors;" "The Water Cycle;" "Energy in an Ecosystem;" "The Nitrogen and Carbon Cycle;" "Temperature and Climate." The students arrange themselves in teams and decide who will represent them first, with only one team member at a time answering questions.

From the laptop at her desk, Ms. Durkin clicks on the question they've chosen: "Abiotic Factors for 300." A question appears on the screen at the front of the room: "Name six abiotic factors," and students practically leap out of their seats vying for the chance to answer the question and earn points for their teams. Two teams manage to come up with all six and split the points; Ms. Durkin touches the screen and the game quickly moves on to a new question. The material will all be on the upcoming test, but for the moment, it's also what they need to win the game. Welcome to learning in the 2000's.

The interactive touch-screen in Ms. Durkin's room is one of several "Smart Boards" St. Jane de Chantal school added to their classrooms this year. If any one thing represents the classroom of the future, the Smart Board might be it. An interactive blackboard that links to the teacher's computer, the Smart Board also links the current generation of computer-savvy kids to the visual prompts that have come to be part of their learning process. The board acts as a large computer screen, allowing lesson plans, graphics, videos and activities to become part of everyday lessons, and the

possibilities are nearly endless. The students in Ms. Durkin's class play "Jeopardy" to review test material, but they also might watch a science video, visit a Web site with good resources for their science projects, or check out an example of the format she wants them to use on an assignment. Anything she can pull up on her laptop can be shown to the students via the Smart Board.

In Mrs. Carole Cooper's fourth-grade math class, the subject is multiplication. On her board is a grid identical to the graph paper her students are required to use for their math homework. With a virtual pen she writes a problem: 4,862 times 93. Each number goes in a separate square of the grid, creating visually distinct columns of numbers.

It's a subtle but important visual aid: students see the teacher solving the problem using the exact format they will use at home. With a red "pen" she highlights the "magic zero" that marks the ones place in the second row of the problem, probably the stickiest part of mastering multiplication. She can use the screen in other subjects to add graphic elements to her lessons: footage of the Holy Father's visit to Washington last spring for religion class, or weather maps showing live Doppler radar for science. "Before, I'd have to call them over to my desk



*Mrs. Eileen Theim teaches in front of the interactive Smart Board linked to the computer at her desk.*



*Mrs. Carole Cooper teaches her fourth-graders multiplication using a special grid on the Smart Board.*


## SMART BOARDS *Continued*



*Eighth-grade student Daria Fogan solves a grammar question in Mrs. Theim's class.*


in groups and have them crowd around my laptop," if there was something important she needed them to see, said Mrs. Cooper.

Mrs. Eileen Theim says she still marvels at all the Smart Board can do. During religion class, she takes students on a three-minute online retreat in which they focus on a Scripture passage and its meaning. In English, they diagram sentences: With a tray of colored pens at the bottom of the screen, she has students highlight the different parts of a sentence: the subject in green, the adverb in red, the verb in blue. The pens create virtual lines on the screen and are easily removed with a special eraser. Small boxes on the side of the screen allow her to make a PowerPoint presentation out of anything she's writing on the board, so she can save a lesson to use for review later on. She can also save what she's writing on the board – lessons or homework assignments – and send it to a student who's absent via e-mail. It can save teachers time in countless ways, and afford them more resources for enriching their lesson plans.

For students, especially those in the upper grades, it's not only an important learning tool, but good preparation for what they'll be seeing in high school, where many schools now require students to have laptops and many classrooms have been outfitted with versions of the Smart Board. In fact, the boards have become so popular that de Chantal had to wait for theirs to arrive this fall after orders became backlogged. Currently there are Smart Boards in most of the upper grades' classrooms; the hope in time is that every classroom will eventually have one. 

## SCHOOL ENDOWMENT FUND GETS BOOST

As St. Jane de Chantal School looks toward maintaining a strong future with high-tech improvements, the Fund that was established to help the school stay strong will be getting a boost in the coming months. The School Endowment Fund will soon get its own Combined Federal Campaign, or CFC, number, allowing it to be a part of this fall's United Way Campaign. This means that those with a matching donation program at work can do a significant service to the school by making a contribution to the Endowment Fund that's then added to by their employer. More details on the program will arrive in the coming months.

The School Endowment Fund was established in 1994 by Monsignor Madigan, then pastor of de Chantal, with \$250,000 in parish savings. The fund was designed to help ensure the strength and financial stability of the school, and contribute to the school through earnings, thus keeping tuition affordable. Contributions can be made to the fund at any time, through donations directed to the fund or by making a charitable bequest in one's will. With this latest step toward inclusion of the Endowment Fund in the CFC program, it is hoped that many will take advantage of the opportunity to support the school and provide for its future. 

### MONSIGNOR CHRISTOPHER FUND: LIFELINE TO SCHOOL FAMILIES IN NEED

For St. Jane de Chantal School families faced with financial crisis, the Monsignor Christopher Fund has been a vital gift. In existence for more than 15 years and named for the former de Chantal pastor, the fund provides need-based scholarships for children in St. Jane de Chantal School. Each year, for several de Chantal families, it means the difference between leaving the school and continuing their Catholic education. Families must first apply through the Archdiocese of Washington's financial aid program, and are referred to the parish depending on their need.

As the economy continues to worsen, the fund will become more important than ever. Poor Box collections are designated throughout the year for the Monsignor Christopher Fund to provide a regular source of funding to the program, but donations can be made directly to the fund any time during the year. Contact the rectory for more information.